

# Responding to Conflict, Dispute and Breakdown in Refugee Sponsorship

## Refugee Sponsorship Training Program



**Suneet Kharay**  
**RSTP Trainer**

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# Today's Agenda

**The Role of Settlement Workers Working with Sponsored Refugees**

**The Difference Between Sponsorship Disputes, Breakdowns and Defaults**

**What Settlement Workers and Agencies can do in Sponsorship Disputes**

**Case Scenario and Q&A**

# PART 1

## **A Reminder: The Role of Settlement Workers Working with Sponsored Refugees**

# Supportive Role of Settlement Workers in Refugee Sponsorship

In refugee sponsorship, a Settlement Worker's role is **supportive**.



**Sponsors are ultimately responsible, so they should be informed and engaged.**

# Strategic Meetings

## **1. Pre-arrival meeting and/or communication between Settlement Workers and the sponsoring group**

- Discuss services available, and how the two will partner and deliver the settlement support needed.

## **2. Plan for the first post-arrival meeting to include, if possible, the sponsor.**

- All parties can make a plan together of how settlement assistance will be provided

## **3. Plan for periodic follow-up.**

- If there are meetings with only the newcomer(s), decide with the newcomer what will be shared with the sponsor. Inform the sponsor as to the outcome of these meetings.
- **Preparation for transition** out of sponsorship period at **9 month mark**.
- **Final preparation for 'Month 13'** and transitioning out of sponsoring group in **month 12**.

## **PART 2**

# **The Difference Between Sponsorship Disputes, Sponsorship Breakdowns & Sponsorship Disputes**

# Disputes vs Breakdowns vs Defaults

## Sponsorship disputes:

- Can range from disagreements over the terms of the sponsorship, to differences of opinions on various issues.
- Do not always result in a sponsorship breakdown.

## Sponsorship breakdown:

- A sponsorship breakdown is an **official declaration** that an “irreparable failure” to meet the sponsorship arrangement has occurred.
- The responsibility for a sponsorship breakdown may rest with the refugees or the sponsor.

# Disputes vs Breakdowns vs Defaults

## **Sponsorship default:**

- Breach of contractual obligations of the sponsorship, or failure to fulfill financial or non-financial obligations.
- Declared if sponsoring group has been found responsible for breakdown and has not attempted to resolve.



# Common Reasons for Disputes and Breakdowns

Insufficient or lack support (financial and/or settlement).

Secondary migration.

Confusion and/or lack of information.

Unrealistic or high expectations.

## **PART 3**

# **What Settlement Workers & Agencies Can Do in Sponsorship Disputes**

# First Step: Problem Solving

Reporting to IRCC = not best first action.\*

Focus on problem solving the situation.

Conduct an assessment to get the facts and more information.

Communicate with the sponsoring group and the sponsored refugee.

Try to mediate or resolve the conflict or dispute.

If unable to resolve, then report to IRCC.

# Things to Keep in Mind...

The sponsoring group's level of experience with refugee sponsorship.

How established and organized the sponsoring group is?

The settlement plan that the sponsoring group submitted.

The specific needs of the sponsored refugee.

The relationship between the sponsoring group and the sponsored refugee.

# Questions to Ask when Conducting Assessment...

What program was the refugee/s sponsored under?

The type of sponsoring group, and whether there is a co-sponsor?

When did the sponsored refugee/s arrive in Canada?

What type of support is not being provided?

What is the cause/s of the dispute?

Is the cause misinformation or confusion?

# Questions to Ask when Conducting Assessment...

How is communication between the sponsoring group and the sponsored refugee/s?

If insufficient support, has the sponsored refugee/s communicated this to the sponsoring group?

If misinformation/confusion, have the sponsoring group attempted to communicate/resolve?

Have the sponsored refugee/s asked the sponsoring group for support?

What actions have the sponsoring group taken to resolve the dispute?

Permission to speak to the sponsoring group on behalf of the refugee/s?

# Conflict Resolution Tips

Sometimes people are not clear about roles and responsibilities, and require an explanation.

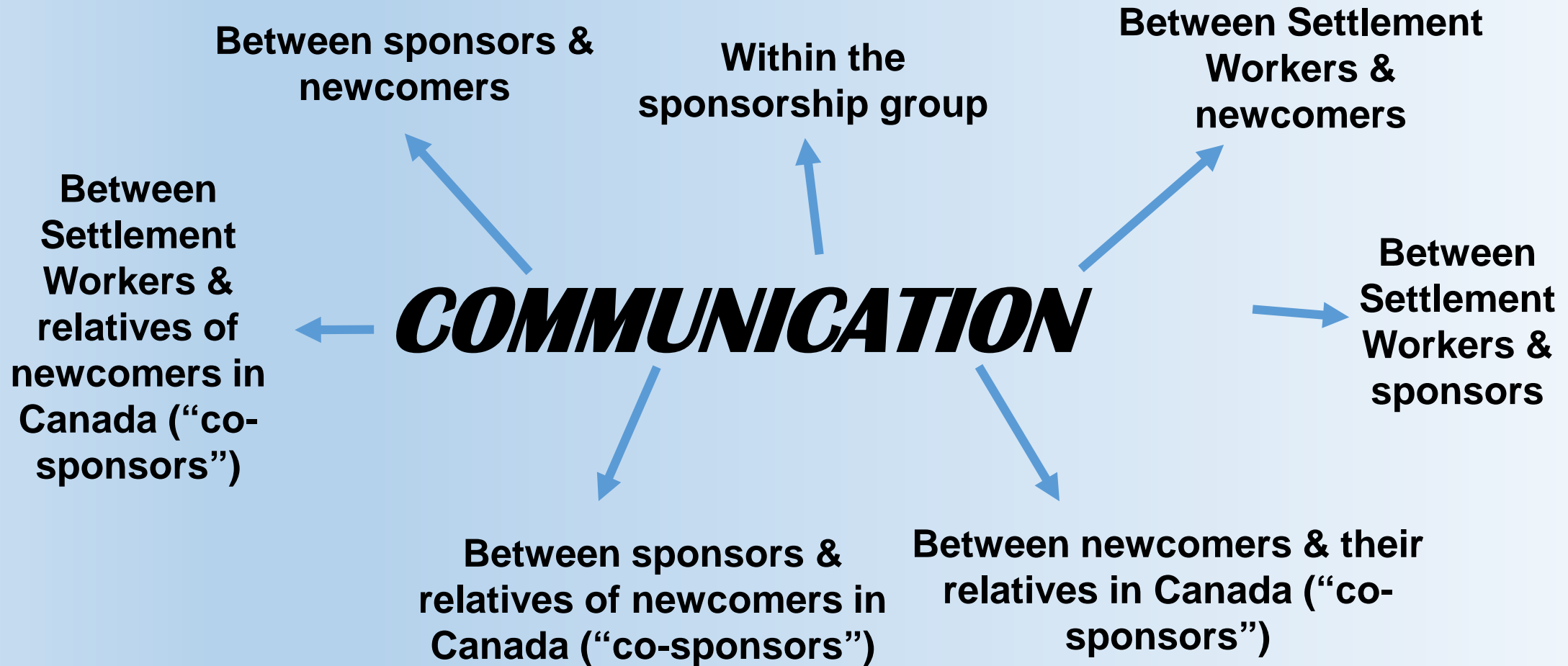
Remember that often intentions are good, even though actions may be hurtful.

Avoid making assumptions based on culture or religion, etc., even if you are part of that culture or religion;

De-escalate extreme emotional reactions, and remind parties that the goal is to work together to find a solution.

Do not blame one party, remain neutral and use neutral language.

# Communication!





# Reporting to IRCC

If dispute has escalated and is irresolvable, either the sponsoring group or sponsored refugee/s should contact IRCC.

**Email:** [PSR-PPPR@cic.gc.ca](mailto:PSR-PPPR@cic.gc.ca)

Appropriate local IRCC office will be notified and contact sponsoring group and sponsored refugee/s.

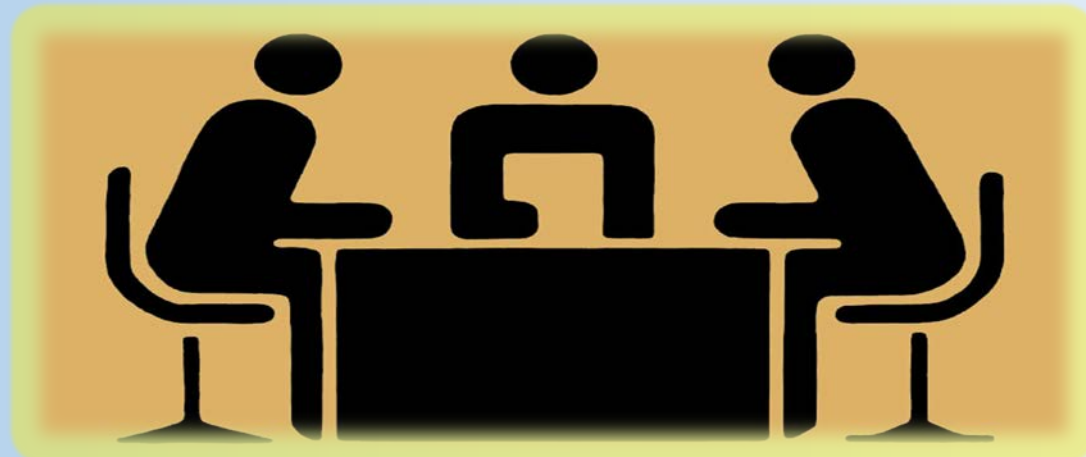
Explain to sponsored refugee/s that there are **no risks** or consequences of reporting insufficient support, abuse, mistreatment or exploitation to IRCC.

Remember: if urgent or serious abuse or violence, contact the police.

# Role of Local IRCC in Disputes

**Local IRCC offices are responsible for managing post-arrival issues, including:**

- “Mediating” between the sponsor and refugee/s; and,
- If required, issuing a formal declaration of sponsorship breakdown to all parties.



# PART 4

## Case Scenario and Q&A

# Case Scenario

**Q&A?**

# Thank you!

## Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP)



**Suneet Kharay**  
**416-290-1700, ext. 414**  
**[skharay@rstp.ca](mailto:skharay@rstp.ca)**

**Toll free: 1-877-290-1701**  
**[info@rstp.ca](mailto:info@rstp.ca)**